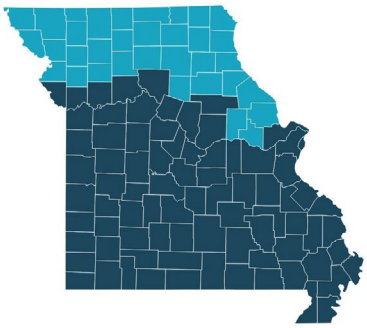


COMMUTING PROFILE
NORTH REGION
JULY 2026

Overview

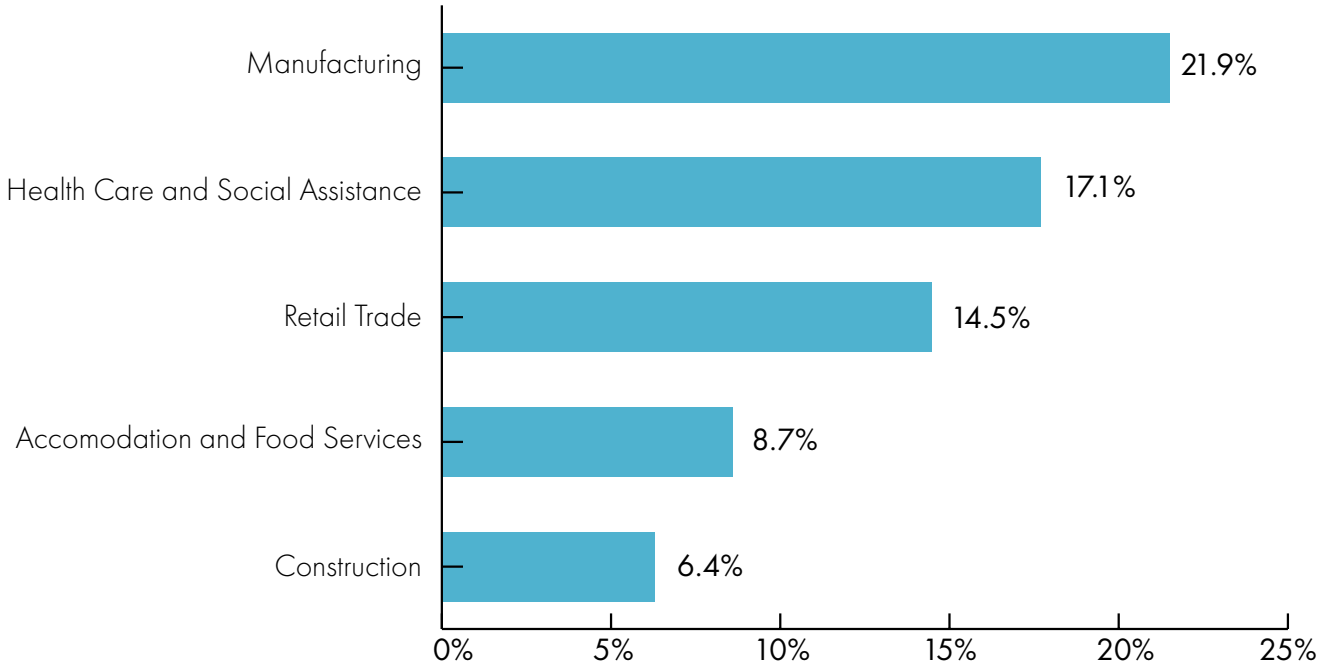
The North Workforce Development Area (WDA) is the largest Missouri region, containing 34 counties. Some of the largest cities in the region include St. Joseph, Hannibal, Moberly, and Kirksville. In 2023, there were 128,172 total private primary jobs** in the North WDA, making up 5.6 percent of private primary jobs in Missouri. Nearly half (48.7%) of the workers employed in the region were aged 30 to 54, while workers aged 29 or younger were 26.6 percent of the workforce and those 55 or older were 24.7 percent. In 2023, over 51.1 percent of private primary jobs in the North WDA paid more than $3,333 per month. Of the remaining jobs, 17.7 percent paid $1,250 per month or less and 31.2 percent paid between $1,251 and $3,333 per month. In 2023, there were more men (53.3%) than women (46.7%) in the North WDA workforce employed at the private primary jobs.

In 2023, 32.7 percent of employees living in the North WDA commuted fewer than 10 miles to work, 24.6 percent of workers traveled more than 50 miles to work, 20.3 percent commuted 10 to 24 miles, and 22.4 percent commuted 25 to 50 miles.

Industry

Manufacturing was the largest employing industry in the region with 28,065 jobs (21.9% of total private primary jobs in the region). *Health Care and Social Assistance; Retail Trade; Accommodation and Food Services;* and *Construction* were other major industry sectors having at least 6 percent of the region's employment share. St. Joseph, Hannibal, and Kirksville were the top cities for employment in the North WDA.

Top North WDA Industry - Private Primary Jobs Percentage



Where the North WDA Labor Force Works and Lives

There were 181,576 workers that lived in the North WDA in 2023. Of the 128,172 workers employed in the North WDA, 72.6 percent commuted to work from within the region. The remaining 27.4 percent commuted into the North WDA from homes outside of the region.

Description	2023	
	Count	Share
North WDA Labor Market Size (Private Primary Jobs)		
Employed in the North WDA	128,172	100.0%
Living in the North WDA	181,576	141.7%
Net Job Inflow (+) or Outflow (-)	-53,404	-
In-Area Labor Force Efficiency (Private Primary Jobs)		
Living in the North WDA	181,576	100.0%
Living and Employed in the North WDA	93,083	51.3%
Living in the North WDA but Employed Outside	88,493	48.7%
In-Area Employment Efficiency (Private Primary Jobs)		
Employed in the North WDA	128,172	100.0%
Employed and Living in the North WDA	93,083	72.6%
Employed in the North WDA but Living Outside	35,089	27.4%

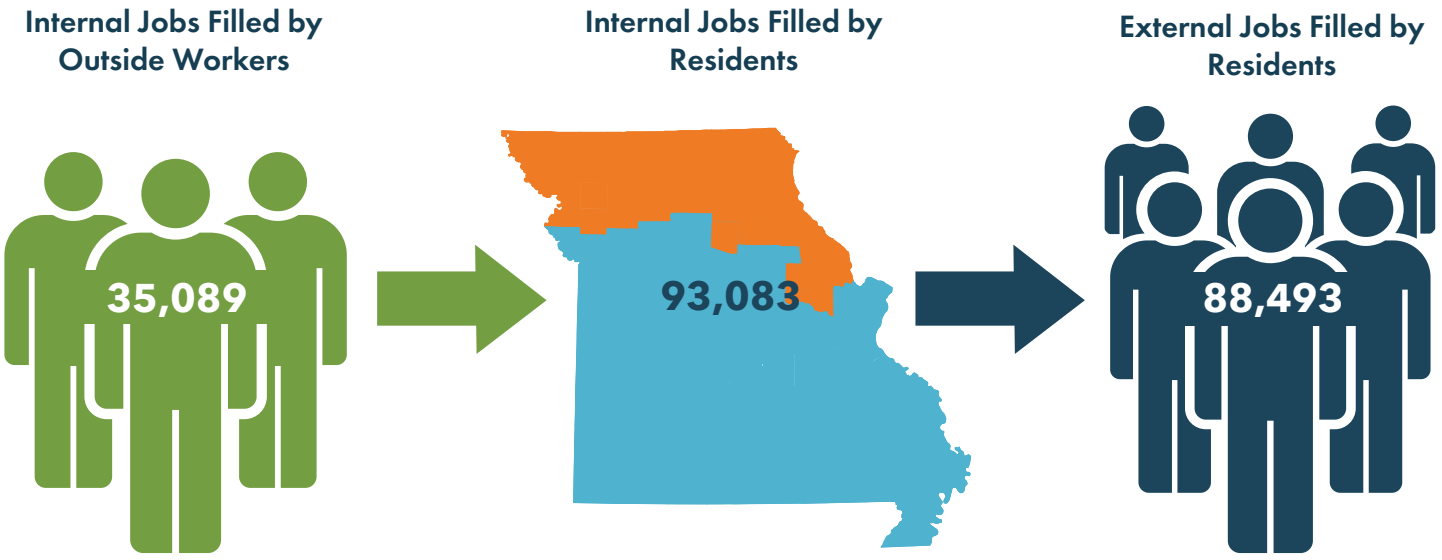
Of the region's residents who were in the workforce, 48.7 percent, or 88,493, commuted to jobs outside of the region. The North WDA attracted 35,089 workers from outside of the region. More than 93,000 North WDA residents lived and worked in the region.

The top seven counties where North WDA workers resided (in descending order) were Buchanan, Marion, Lincoln, Adair, Andrew, Nodaway, and Randolph.

The top five counties where North WDA residents worked in 2023 (in descending order) were Buchanan, St. Louis County, St. Charles, Jackson, and Marion.

Inflow/Outflow

Overall, 181,576 employees lived in the North WDA and 128,172 workers were employed in the region, resulting in a net outflow of 53,404 workers from the region.



The following table shows the worker composition for the job inflow and outflow groups as well as worker characteristics of the interior job flow. Of the 93,083 individuals who lived and worked in the region, 26.0 percent were aged 29 years or younger, 48.8 percent were aged 30 to 54 years, and 25.1 percent were aged 55 years or older. Nearly 46% percent worked in the *Services* industry.

North WDA Description	2023	
	Count	Share
Outflow Job Characteristics (Private Primary Jobs)		
External Jobs Filled by Residents	88,493	100.0%
Workers Aged 29 or younger	23,847	26.9%
Workers Aged 30 to 54	44,049	49.8%
Workers Aged 55 or older	20,597	23.3%
Workers Earning $1,250 per month or less	13,156	14.9%
Workers Earning $1,251 to $3,333 per month	24,286	27.4%
Workers Earning More than $3,333 per month	51,051	57.7%
Workers in the "Goods Producing" Industry Class	21,678	24.5%
Workers in the "Trade, Transportation, and Utilities" Industry Class	25,363	28.7%
Workers in the "All Other Services" Industry Class	41,452	46.8%
Inflow Job Characteristics (Private Primary Jobs)		
Internal Jobs Filled by Outside Workers	35,089	100.0%
Workers Aged 29 or younger	9,799	27.9%
Workers Aged 30 to 54	16,965	48.3%
Workers Aged 55 or older	8,325	23.7%
Workers Earning $1,250 per month or less	6,503	18.5%
Workers Earning $1,251 to $3,333 per month	10,184	29.0%
Workers Earning More than $3,333 per month	18,402	52.4%
Workers in the "Goods Producing" Industry Class	9,767	27.8%
Workers in the "Trade, Transportation, and Utilities" Industry Class	11,363	32.4%
Workers in the "All Other Services" Industry Class	13,959	39.8%
Interior Flow Job Characteristics (Private Primary Jobs)		
Internal Jobs Filled by Residents	93,083	100.0%
Workers Aged 29 or younger	24,240	26.0%
Workers Aged 30 to 54	45,462	48.8%
Workers Aged 55 or older	23,381	25.1%
Workers Earning $1,250 per month or less	16,204	17.4%
Workers Earning $1,251 to $3,333 per month	29,766	32.0%
Workers Earning More than $3,333 per month	47,113	50.6%
Workers in the "Goods Producing" Industry Class	30,063	32.3%
Workers in the "Trade, Transportation, and Utilities" Industry Class	20,296	21.8%
Workers in the "All Other Services" Industry Class	42,724	45.9%

Commuter Pattern

The table below indicates that many workers living in North WDA and employed at their private primary jobs commute to another county for employment. All but Adair and Buchanan counties had more than of half of their residents commuting outside their county of residence for jobs. Larger cities, such as St. Joseph (Buchanan), Hannibal (Marion), Moberly (Randolph), and Kirksville (Adair), attracted workers from the surrounding counties. These counties also had a relatively lower percentage of workers who left the county to find work. Interstate 70, Interstate 35, U.S. Highway 63, and U.S. Highway 61 put the St. Louis and Kansas City regions within commuting distance for workers.

North WDA			
Percent of North WDA Residents Working Outside of Home County			
Adair	46%	Livingston	56%
Andrew	89%	Macon	62%
Atchison	54%	Marion	59%
Buchanan	33%	Mercer	66%
Caldwell	84%	Monroe	85%
Clark	71%	Montgomery	77%
Clinton	88%	Nodaway	55%
Daviess	81%	Pike	70%
DeKalb	87%	Putnam	76%
Gentry	69%	Ralls	80%
Grundy	69%	Randolph	59%
Harrison	73%	Schuyler	83%
Holt	73%	Scotland	68%
Knox	72%	Shelby	66%
Lewis	75%	Sullivan	52%
Lincoln	83%	Warren	86%
Linn	53%	Worth	86%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (LODES), (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2023*), URL: https://onthemap.ces.census.gov/

**2023 is the latest year for which LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (commuting data) is available from the U.S. Census Bureau. To maintain the consistency of data in this report, all relevant data used is also from 2023, although later data for some data points was available.*

LEHD data infrastructure tracks jobs as its primary unit instead of people. As such, the system naturally captures more than one job per person when available in the data. The **dominant (or primary) job for an individual is defined as the job that earned the individual the most money. Constructed this way, ***the number of primary jobs should be equal to the number of workers.***

This report was prepared by the staff of the Missouri Economic Research and Information Center (MERIC). All data in this report was current at the time of publication and is subject to revision. This workforce product was funded by a grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration. The product was created by the recipient and does not necessarily reflect the official position of the U.S. Department of Labor. The U.S. Department of Labor makes no guarantees, warranties, or assurances of any kind, express or implied, with respect to such information, including any information on linked sites and including, but not limited to, accuracy of the information or its completeness, timeliness, usefulness, adequacy, continued availability, or ownership. This product is copyrighted by the institution that created it. Internal use by an organization and/or personal use by an individual for non-commercial purposes is permissible. All other uses require the prior authorization of the copyright owner.